

1. In an electronic document handling system, a method of associating documents comprising the steps of:

- generating a staple data object, for representing an association of selected pages and selected documents;
- generating an electronic cover sheet for the stack object;
- accepting from a user a list of at least one page of at least one electronic document;
- referencing each page or each electronic document in the list as an item of the stack object;
- accepting a staple instruction from a user; and
- cryptographically securing the staple data object in response to receipt of the staple instruction.

3. The method of claim 1, wherein the step of accepting a list is a step of accepting a computer-generated list.

4. The method of claim 1, further comprising a step of presenting a user with an online form as an aid to selecting pages or documents for association as a stack.

5. The method of claim 1, further comprising a step of prompting for the staple instruction by presenting the user with a stapler icon which, when selected, represents the staple instruction.

6. The method of claim 1, further comprising a step of copying the selected pages and selected documents in a stack to static storage.

7. The method of claim 1, further comprising a step of copying the selected pages and selected documents in a stack to a local storage device local to the electronic document handling system.

8. The method of claim 1, further comprising the steps of:
displaying a first list of documents, wherein the first list of documents lists the
documents that are selected for inclusion in an open stack;

4 displaying a second list of document, wherein the second list of documents list
5 documents that have not been selected for inclusion in an open stack; and
6 displaying a user interface control operative to obtain selections from a user of
7 documents from the second list for inclusion in an open stack.

1 9. In an electronic document handling system, a method of manipulating documents
2 comprising the steps of:

3 generating a staple data object, for representing an association of selected pages and
4 selected documents;

5 generating an electronic cover sheet for the stack object;

6 accepting from a user a list of at least one page of at least one electronic document;

7 referencing each page or each electronic document in the list as an item of the stack
8 object;

9 accepting a staple instruction from a user;

10 cryptographically securing the staple data object in response to receipt of the staple
11 instruction;

12 opening a secured stack upon receipt of a stack open instruction;

13 presenting the contents of the secured stack for perusal by the user;

14 accepting additions and deletions of items on the secured stack; and

15 resecuring the secure stack upon receipt of a stack restaple operation.

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